

# Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is a regional drought contingency plan?**

**A:** A regional drought contingency plan is a plan that strives to increase the resiliency of a region's water resources in the face of future climate and drought conditions.

**Q: How will this plan affect local public water agencies' existing drought planning documents?**

**A:** The Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan does not affect existing public water agency-specific contingency plans, but instead collaborates with public water agencies to prepare for and respond to droughts more efficiently. Public water agencies were actively involved as part of the Executive Committee which was responsible for plan direction, content development, consistency with local drought resiliency goals, and subsequent plan implementation.

**Q: Who developed the plan?**

**A:** The El Dorado Water Agency and the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, are the local and federal sponsors, respectively. As part of plan development, two groups were formed:

- Executive Committee: Consists of public water agencies and entities with specific management responsibilities for small water systems and rural communities that are vulnerable to droughts. The Executive Committee is responsible for plan direction, content development, consistency with local drought resiliency goals, and subsequent plan implementation.
- Drought Planning Task Force: Is a small, representative "working group" that brings together a specific set of skills and perspectives to review, edit, and provide direction for the Executive Committee to prepare the plan. They have on-the-ground expertise regarding water management and drought protection for specific water use areas or categories.

**Q: What is a vulnerability?**

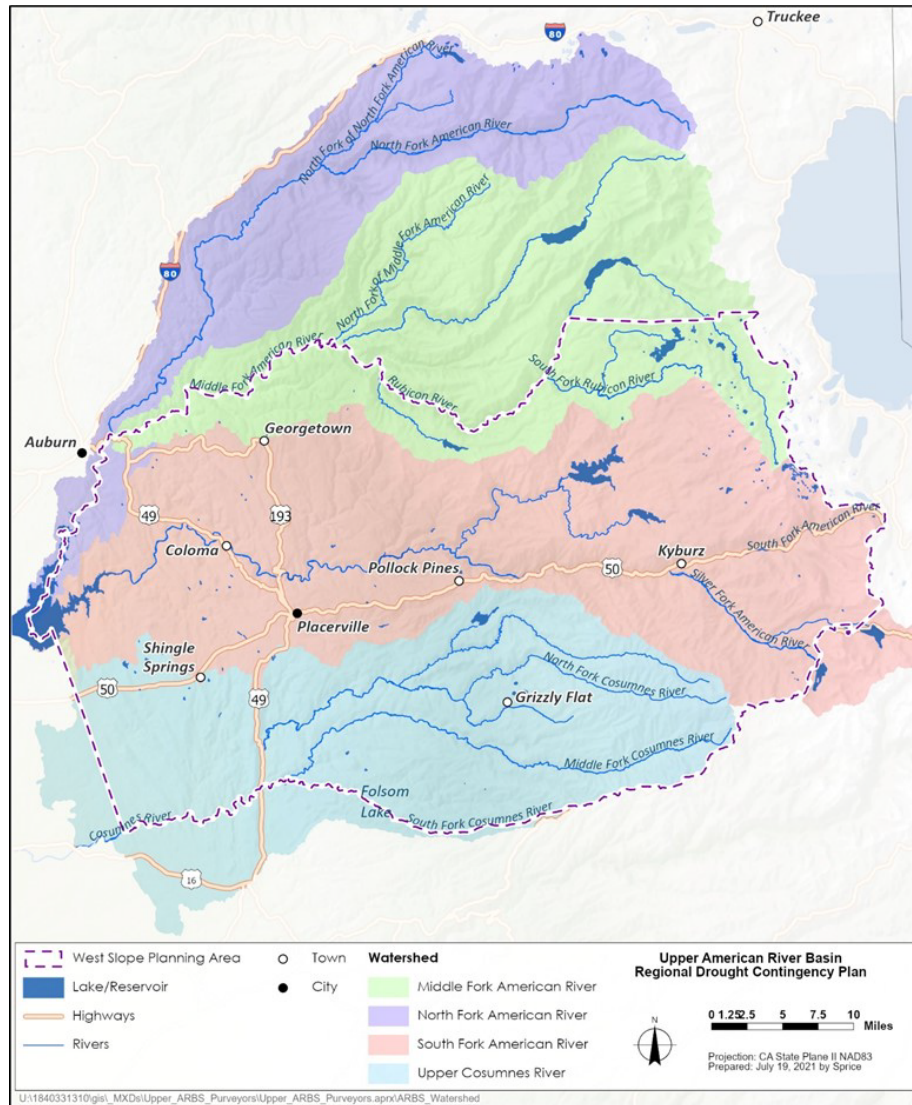
**A:** Features that are susceptible to droughts, climate change, and other uncontrollable factors, resulting in not being able to meet environmental and human consumption needs.

**Q: What is a mitigation action?**

**A:** Mitigation actions are pro-active projects or activities intended to address drought-specific vulnerabilities, to improve the region's resilience during drought conditions.

**Q: What geographic area does the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan cover?**

**A:** The focus of the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan is the western foothill area of El Dorado County (West Slope) which includes portions of four watersheds, as shown in the below figure.



**Q: How were projects identified in the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan?**

**A:** Identified projects (mitigation actions) were initially compiled from existing regional plans and studies. The Executive Committee reviewed and refined the project list during one of the Executive Committee meetings. A call for projects was also sent to the Drought Planning Task Force for additional project input and identification.

**Q: What is a response action?**

**A:** Activities which can help expeditiously mitigate impacts during the early stages of drought and ongoing drought conditions.

**Q: How will the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan address drought vulnerabilities observed by small water systems?**

**A:** The Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan recognizes that small water systems are especially vulnerable to drought as they rely primarily on one water source, have less redundancy than public water agencies, do not have access to other alternative water supplies during dry conditions, and do not have drought contingency plans. Even if individual residents and small public water systems are in close proximity to larger public water agencies, they are often isolated and not able to be economically or feasibly connected to these larger systems due to the foothill's challenging terrain. Because of this higher vulnerability, a handful of specific mitigation actions were developed that focus on improving access to and reliability of water supplies when water supplies are limited during drought conditions. In addition, the signing of Senate Bill 552 in September 2021 includes new responsibilities and requirements, at both the state and local levels, to help small water systems reduce their risk of inadequate water supply during a water shortage event. El Dorado Water Agency is currently in the process of implementing the requirements associated with Senate Bill 552. For more information on Senate Bill 552, please visit El Dorado Water Agency's [webpage about Senate Bill 552](#).

**Q: How often will the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan be updated?**

**A:** The El Dorado Water Agency intends to assess the need for an update every five years, recognizing that there may be events or occurrences which trigger an update of the Upper American River Basin Regional Drought Contingency Plan, or a portion thereof, outside of that cycle.